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ABSTRACT

The Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) was developed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), in response to Texas House Bill 72 (1984), which mandated a new basic skills assessment program for mathematics, reading, and writing at grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11. This document is one in a series of Instructional Strategies Guides designed to familiarize Texas educators with the types of strategies employed in assessing learner mastery of TEAMS objectives and to provide suggested instructional activities that can be used to promote mastery of those objectives. This guide focuses on the TEAMS writing objectives for grade 1. It provides a detailed description of the test items used to measure each writing objective. The four objectives are subsumed under two skill areas: (1) mechanics (capitalization, punctuation, spelling); and (2) English usage (subject-verb agreement). The following information is provided for each objective: (1) a description of the objective; (2) a sample item; (3) test questions; (4) answer choices; (5) answer analysis for the sample item; (6) instructional emphases; and (7) possible instructional activities. (JAZ)

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INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES GUIDE

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WRITING
GRADE 1

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August 1986

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TEAMS INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES GUIDE

WRITING

GRADE 1

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INTRODUCTION

During 1980-1985 the Texas Education Agency (TEA) administered a criterion-referenced testing program, the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS). That program was designed to measure minimum skills in mathematics, reading, and writing at Grades 3, 5, and 9. In July 1984, under the provisions of House Bill 72, a new basic skills assessment program was mandated in mathematics, reading, and writing at Grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. In response, development of the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) was instituted by TEA during the 1985-1986 school year.

School district personnel from across Texas participated in all aspects of the development of TEAMS. Basic skills objectives were selected after a thorough review of the State Board of Education Rules for Curriculum, GE4 450 01 (Essential Elements). Under TEA supervision measurement specifications and test items were developed for each objective. Statewide field testing was conducted to ensure the quality of test items. The State Board of Education then approved the TEAMS tests for administration.

Because of the significance of the TEAMS program, TEA is providing Texas educators with instructional strategies guides for all objectives measured on each TEAMS examination. These guides describe the TEAMS objectives as well as instructional considerations and activities that can be used to promote mastery of TEAMS objectives.

This instructional strategies guide focuses on the TEAMS writing objectives for Grade 1. It provides a detailed description of the test items used to measure each writing objective. In addition, a brief instructional analysis is provided for each objective as are instructional activities that can help students master the objective.

Texas educators will undoubtedly vary in the ways they wish to promote learner mastery of the TEAMS objectives. Thus, the instructional components of this guide are <u>not</u> intended to be prescriptive. Teachers should view suggested activities as potential approaches that lead to mastery of the TEAMS objectives.

<u>Components of the Instructional Strategies Guide</u>

Four TEAMS writing objectives are measured at the first grade level. These objectives are subsumed under one of two skill areas. The distribution of the writing objectives by skill area is shown on the next page.

SKILL AREA	OBJECTIVE
Mechanics	Capitalization Punctuation Spelling
English Usage	Subject-Verb Agreement

This guide provides the following information for each of the writing objectives included in the TEAMS Grade 1 test.

Description of the objective. This section provides a succinct overview of the objective's focus.

Sample item. An illustrative sample item follows the description of each objective. This item is consistent with the test specifications for the objective, hence is representative of the TEAMS items used to measure students' mastery of the objective.

Test questions. To provide a more detailed view of how each TEAMS objective is assessed, the next section provides a description of the test question. For example, Grade 1 spelling items require students to spell an orally presented word. Test items for other first grade writing objectives present directions followed by three answer choices. This component of the guide provides these directions as well as a list of rules eligible for testing.

Answer choices. The next section deals with the response to each multiple-choice or open-ended test item. For multiple-choice items, important characteristics of the answer choices are described.

Answer analysis for sample item. An analysis of the answer choices from the sample item is then provided for objectives measured by multiple-choice items, that is, all objectives except spelling. This analysis explains why the correct answer is right and why the incorrect answers are wrong. For the spelling objective, this section explains how open-ended responses are scored.

Instructional emphases. Considerations relevant to the design of instructional sequences for each TEAMS objective are described in this section. These instructional analyses are not intended to represent the only important points associated with instruction aimed at a particular objective. However, it is hoped that these discussions will stimulate educators' consideration of each objective.

Possible instructional activities. A final section discusses several instructional activities for each objective that Texas educators may consider as they organize their instructional plans.

Use of the Instructional Strategies Guide

This TEAMS instructional strategies guide is designed to accomplish two goals. First, the guide enables Texas educators to become familiar with the types of strategies employed to assess learner mastery of the TEAMS Grade 1 writing objectives. Educators who wish to learn more about how the TEAMS objectives are tested should consult the TEAMS objectives and measurement specifications available at cost from TEA. The level of detail provided in this instructional strategies guide should provide sufficient information for educators to design effective instructional sequences. Second, each instructional strategies guide provides suggestions for instructional activities that can be used to promote mastery of TEAMS objectives.

The specific setting in which a given district chooses to provide instruction in the TEAMS objectives will influence the way in which the materials in this guide can be employed. The format of the guide permits flexible use.

TEAMS ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS OBJECTIVES

WRITING: GRADE ONE

The TEAMS first grade writing objectives according to skill area are:

- Mechanics
  - Capitalization
  - Punctuation
  - Spelling
- English Usage
  - Subject-Verb Agreement

All objectives, except for the spelling objective, are measured by multiple-choice items that generally present three sentences, one of which is written correctly. In these items the sentence that is written correctly is the correct answer choice. Spelling items consist of an orally presented word that is to be written by students. The correct spelling of the word is the correct answer.

All possible answer choices for multiple-choice items will be indicated by an oval appearing before a sentence. In spelling items, a blank line following the item number will be provided for students to write the spelling word.

SKILL AREA: MECHANICS

The skill area of mechanics includes three objectives, namely, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. For test items measuring capitalization and punctuation, the student will be presented with three sentences and asked to identify the sentence correctly capitalized or punctuated. For test items measuring spelling, the student will be required to spell an orally presented word.

Objective 1: Demonstrate knowledge of standard uses of capitalization.

This objective requires students to identify which one of three sentences is capitalized correctly.

Sample Item*

Teacher says:

FOR EACH QUESTION, READ THE THREE SENTENCES TO YOURSELF. FIND THE ONE WHICH USES CAPITAL LETTERS CORRECTLY. FILL IN THE SPACE NEXT TO YOUR ANSWER.

Jenny and i are going to the zoo.

The yellow bird flew away.

Did you see mike at the park?

Test Questions

1. Three sentences, as described below, will be presented.
2. Preceding the capitalization items the teacher will read the instructions, "FOR EACH QUESTION, READ THE THREE SENTENCES TO YOURSELF. FIND THE ONE WHICH USES CAPITAL LETTERS CORRECTLY. FILL IN THE SPACE NEXT TO YOUR ANSWER."
3. The following capitalization rules are eligible for testing:
   a. The first word of a sentence should always be capitalized.
   b. The pronoun "I" should always be capitalized.
   c. The name of a person should always be capitalized.

---

* The type size in this sample and in other samples of this guide is smaller than the type appearing in the test booklet. Approximate examples of the actual type size can be found in the TEAMS Instructional Strategies Guide for Reading Grade 1.

Answer Choices

1. Each test item will consist of three different simple sentences, only one of which will be capitalized correctly.

2. No sentence will exceed eight words in length.

3. All words, except proper nouns, will be taken from the first grade section of the TEA Cumulative Vocabulary List.

4. The correct answer choice will be the sentence that illustrates one or more of the capitalization rules eligible for testing.

5. Each of the two incorrect answer choices will violate one of the capitalization rules eligible for testing.

Answer Analysis for Sample Item

1. The first sentence is an incorrect answer choice. The first word in the sentence is capitalized; however, the pronoun "i" is not capitalized.

2. The second sentence is the correct answer choice because it is capitalized correctly.

3. The third sentence is an incorrect answer choice. Although the first word in the sentence is properly capitalized, the person's name "Mike" is not.

Instructional Emphases

The three capitalization rules eligible for testing at the first grade level represent writing conventions that emerge early in the reading and writing instruction process. Often, the first word a child learns to write and to recognize is the child's own name. The child knows that this name begins with a capital letter, or a letter that is larger and written somewhat differently than "small" letters. This awareness generalizes to a knowledge that it is not only one's own name that begins with a capital letter; everyone's name is written that way.

As familiar to children as their name is the frequently uttered pronoun "I." It provides a "name" that we can use to talk about ourselves, and is always written as a capital letter.

The third basic capitalization rule that first graders must remember is that every sentence begins with a capital letter, whether or not the first word in the sentence is a word requiring capitalization by itself.

These fundamental and primary capitalization concepts can be easily learned provided that students are given ample opportunities to read and to write.

Possible Instructional Activities

Something Special

Explain to students that a capital letter at the beginning of a word means that "something special" is going on. Some words--like a person's name and the word "I"--have capital letters all the time. Most words, however, only begin with capital letters if they are at a special place in a sentence. Ask, "Where is that place?"; the desired response is, of course, "At the beginning."

Write on the board a word that begins with a lowercase letter. It should be a word that could easily be used as the first word in a simple sentence (for example, "dogs" rather than "dog"; "the" rather than "of"; "my" rather than "mine"). To model the desired behavior, explain that you are going to make "something special" happen to the word on the board by putting it at the beginning of a sentence. Ask students to tell you what you should do first to the word if it is going to begin a sentence. ("Make it start with a capital letter.") Erase the initial letter of the word and replace it with a capital letter; then write a simple three- or four-word sentence beginning with the word.

After you have modeled the first sentence, write another word on the board and call on a student to say a sentence beginning with the word. Following the word on the board, write the remaining words in the student's sentence. Leave the original word uncapitalized. (You can also incorporate practice in final punctuation marks into this activity by leaving the ending mark out.) Ask a student to come to the board to fix the sentence. This student is to erase the initial letter and replace it with a capital letter. (If you left out the ending mark, the student should supply it at this point.) Repeat these steps several times, involving new words, students, and sentences.

As a follow-up activity, you can write a list of words on the board and have students write, at their seats, sentences beginning with these words.

People I Know

Have students number their papers from 1 to 5. After each number, ask students to write the words "I know" followed by a person's name (and a period).

As a continuation or variation, have students write five sentences beginning with the words "I wish I knew." This phrase will generate names of famous people such as musicians, athletes, and actors. Before students write their sentences, ask them to name people they would like to know. Write these names on the board and ask students to use the displayed names in their "I wish I knew" sentences. This activity will generate practice in capitalizing both first and last names. Moreover, it will demonstrate the fact that the pronoun "I" is always capitalized, whether or not it appears at the beginning of a sentence.

Objective 2: Demonstrate knowledge of standard punctuation.

This objective requires students to identify which one of three sentences is punctuated correctly.

Sample Item

Teacher says:

FOR EACH QUESTION, READ THE THREE SENTENCES TO YOURSELF. FIND THE ONE SENTENCE WHICH USES A PERIOD OR QUESTION MARK CORRECTLY. FILL IN THE SPACE NEXT TO YOUR ANSWER.

◯ Why did she laugh.

◯ We walk to school together

◯ Lucinda likes my new wagon.

Test Questions

1. Three sentences, as described below, will be presented.

2. Preceding the punctuation items teachers will read the instructions, "FOR EACH QUESTION, READ THE THREE SENTENCES TO YOURSELF. FIND THE ONE SENTENCE WHICH USES A PERIOD OR A QUESTION MARK CORRECTLY. FILL IN THE SPACE NEXT TO YOUR ANSWER."

3. The following punctuation rules are eligible for testing:

   a. A period should always be used at the end of a declarative sentence (statement).

   b. A question mark should always be used at the end of an interrogative sentence (question).

Answer Choices

1. Each test item will consist of three different simple sentences, only one of which will be punctuated correctly.

2. No sentence will exceed 8 words in length.

3. All words, except pronouns, will be taken from the first-grade section of the TEA Cumulative Vocabulary List.

4. The correct answer choice will be the sentence that illustrates one of the punctuation rules eligible for testing.

5. The incorrect answer choices will be the other two sentences, each of which will represent one of the following types of errors:

   a. missing punctuation at the end of a statement or a question

   b. an incorrect period at the end of a question

   Each error type will be represented by one of the two incorrect answer choices.

6. Interrogative sentences will begin with one of the following words: "where," "when," "why," "who," "what," "how," or "are."

7. The first word in approximately one-third of the declarative sentences will begin with the letter W.

8. No punctuation other than a period or a question mark will be used.

Answer Analysis for Sample Item

1. The first sentence is an incorrect answer choice because a period has been incorrectly placed at the end of an interrogative sentence.

2. The second sentence is an incorrect answer choice because it lacks a period as a final punctuation mark.

3. The third sentence is the correct answer choice because it is punctuated correctly. A period has been properly placed at the end of a declarative sentence.

Instructional Emphases

To properly use periods and question marks, students must be able to distinguish between a statement, which "tells" something, and a question, which "asks" something. They also need to be aware of the fact that a sentence, in addition to beginning with a capital letter, requires a punctuation mark to indicate its ending. A statement needs a final period, and a question must end with a question mark.

First grade teachers generally provide ample instruction, review, and practice in these important and fundamental concepts in the course of teaching young students to read and to write. By doing so, you can ensure that your students are readily able to recognize the proper and improper uses of periods and question marks that appear on the TEAMS examination.

Possible Instructional Activities

P and Q Collage

Prepare a bulletin board that is divided into two equal sections. One section will say, at the top, "Statements" (or "Telling Sentences"). Below this title will appear a large, boxed period. The other half of the bulletin board display will bear the title "Questions" (or "Asking Sentences"), beneath which will appear a large, boxed question mark.

Have students look through library books for questions and statements. Provide each student with two strips of paper. On one strip, a statement should be copied; on the other, a question should be copied. The sentences go on the bulletin board--each type of sentence on the appropriate side of the display--to create a "P and Q collage." You might want to have your students copy the sentences in different-colored crayons so that your "collage" will be bright and colorful.

Questions and Answers

Divide the chalkboard into two sections titled "Questions" and "Answers." Ask a student to think of a question. This question is then to be written on the board, either by you or by the student who offered it (depending on your students' writing abilities at the time you implement this activity). Ask another student for an answer to the question, which will be written across from the question on the "Answers" side of the board. Encourage your students to use complete sentences. (For example, if the question is, "Where are you?" and the answer obtained is "At school," provide a completed response such as "I am at school." or "We are at school.") When several Q-and-A pairs appear on the board, use the interrogative and declarative sentences to elicit responses from students regarding ending punctuation marks in "asking sentences" and "telling sentences."

As a variation or follow-up activity, you can have students create questions and answers at their seats. Each student is to write a question. Students then rotate papers in a prescribed fashion (such as by rows or columns, with the last row or column passing papers to the first). Each student writes an answer to the question that appears on the new paper. Collect these Q-and-A pairs. Write on the board pairs that are illustrative of proper or improper uses of end marks (and initial capital letters).

Punctuation Dictation

An activity in which students write declarative and interrogative sentences that are read aloud can serve as an effective review exercise in the use of final periods and

question marks, or "end marks." On the board, write a large, boxed period and a large, boxed question mark. By asking questions, have students tell you: (1) what each punctuation mark is called; (2) which mark appears at the end of a statement, or "telling sentence"; and (3) which mark appears at the end of a question, or "asking sentence."

Have students number their papers from 1 to 10. Tell them that they are to write each sentence as you say it aloud. Remind them of the following three rules for writing sentences:

1. A sentence always begins with a capital letter.
2. A "telling sentence" ends with a period.
3. An "asking sentence" ends with a question mark.

Sentences should be brief (3 to 5 words in length). Read each sentence twice, slowly and clearly, emphasizing raised final intonation for questions and lowered final intonation for statements. The following is a sample list of dictation sentences that employs only words taken from the first grade section of the TEA Cumulative Vocabulary List and adheres to the guidelines for the creation of TEAMS first grade punctuation items. You will need to construct your own sentences based on words that your students know how to write.

1. Are you happy?
2. She is very busy.
3. My cat likes to eat.
4. When will we go?
5. White birds are pretty.
6. School is fun.
7. How did he do that?
8. Why is she smiling?
9. The wind is cold.
10. Who is with you?

When students have written all ten sentences, read each sentence one more time as students check their work. You may either collect, correct, and return dictation papers or, for immediate feedback, call on a different student to write each sentence on the board (or write each sentence yourself) and examine sentences in a class discussion as students correct their own work.

End Mark Dictation

As a simpler version of the previous activity, you can distribute worksheets on which sentences without final punctuation marks appear. As you read each sentence, students are to punctuate it.

Q & A Word Order

This activity requires students to work independently using three-word groups to form simple statements from questions and vice versa. On a worksheet, list five to ten statements each of which consists of three words whose order can be changed (that is, the first two words can be switched) to form a question. Following each statement should appear a line where students are to write the corresponding question. For example:

1.	She is here.	Is she here?
2.	They will go.	Will they go?
3.	School is fun.	Is school fun?
4.	It was green.	Was it green?
5.	We can win.	Can we win?

The worksheet should contain an equal number of questions to be turned into statements.

1.	Will we play?	We will play.
2.	Are they late?	They are late.
3.	Is honey sweet?	Honey is sweet.
4.	Are babies small?	Babies are small.
5.	Can he wait?	He can wait.

Objective 3: Write the correct spelling of commonly used words.

This objective requires the student to write a word that has been presented orally.

Sample Item

The teacher says all of the following aloud.

WE ARE GOING TO TAKE A SPELLING TEST. YOU WILL WRITE YOUR ANSWERS ON THE LINES NEXT TO EACH NUMBER. BE SURE TO WRITE AS CAREFULLY AS YOU CAN. FIRST I WILL SAY A WORD FOR YOU TO SPELL. THEN I WILL USE THE WORD IN A SENTENCE. FINALLY I WILL SAY THE WORD AGAIN.

THE WORD IS HOT.

FIRE IS HOT.

SPELL THE WORD HOT.

Test Questions

1. A test item will require students to spell an orally presented word.

2. For each item, the teacher will give the instructions, "The word is [tested word]. [Sentence containing the tested word.] Spell the word [tested word]."

3. The sentence that uses the tested word will not exceed eight words in length.

4. All words, except proper nouns, in the sentence that uses the tested word will be taken from the first grade section of the TEA Cumulative Vocabulary List.

Answer Choices

1. Students will write the tested spelling word on a blank line preceded by a number identifying the item.

2. The correct answer will be the correct spelling of the tested word.

3. Incorrect answers will be incorrect spellings of the tested word.

Answer Analysis for Sample Item

The spelling objective for first grade does not involve multiple-choice items. Rather, the student writes in a response. These responses are scored as correct or incorrect as follows:

Rules for determining a correct response:

1. The word must be spelled correctly.

2. The word may be written in manuscript (printed letters) or cursive.

3. The word may be written in lowercase letters, capital letters, or a combination of the two types.

4. The word may contain an "i" or "j" that is not dotted as long as it can be determined that an "i" (not "e") or a "j" (not "g") was intended.

5. The word may contain reversed letters, such as "ƨ," "ƨ," "ƿ," or "ɒ," except when the reversal forms another letter such as "b" for "d" and "p" for "q."

Rules for determining an incorrect response:

1. The word is spelled incorrectly.

2. The handwriting is illegible.

3. A "t" is not crossed, allowing it to be mistaken for an "l."

4. The word contains a reversal that forms another letter ("b," "d," "p," or "q").

Instructional Emphases

An understanding of basic sound-letter correspondences is central to learner mastery of the TEAMS first grade spelling objective. Instruction, review, and practice in this skill, whether in the context of reading or writing, all constitute relevant preparation.

The spelling words that are eligible for inclusion in this section of the TEAMS test for grade one are listed in the first-grade section of the TEAMS Spelling List. Whenever possible, incorporate these spelling words into your reading and writing instruction activities.

Possible Instructional Activities

Weekly Words

Create a "master set" of 5"x7" index cards on which have been written, in large, lowercase letters, the 51 words from the TEA Spelling List for Grade 1. At the beginning of each week, distribute five blank 3"x5" cards to each student. Select five word cards from your master set. It will prove helpful to choose five words that are not easily confused. For example, rather than selecting the first five words on the list--"a," "am," "an," "and," and "at"--choose a group of words that sound different, such as "red," "box," "fun," "pig," and "and."

Present the first word orally. Say, for example, "Listen to this sentence: 'Kelly's sweater is red.' Can anyone spell the word 'red'?" A student volunteer may spell the word for you, or you can provide the spelling orally yourself. Have the class repeat after you, "Red. R-E-D. Red." Then, show students the card displaying the word "red." Students are to copy the word on one of their five cards. Continue in this manner with each of the remaining four words.

You may wish to have each student write a two- or three-sentence illustrated story containing all five of the words for the week. Alternatively, have a "competition" to see who can write a sentence or two containing all five of the words--with the smallest number of extra words added. The idea is to have students become familiar with the five spelling words. With this goal in mind, students should also be encouraged to use their spelling cards with friends or at home. A parent or friend can say the word and ask the student to spell it.

Friday can be "spelling test" day. Administer the five-word spelling test in the same manner as the TEAMS first grade spelling items are presented. If you wish, students who score 100% can have a star placed by their name on a chart or bulletin board display. Every fourth or fifth Friday can be a review spelling test in which previous weeks' words are tested.

Sound Sentences

At Grade 1 many spelling words are three-letter words consisting of a consonant-short vowel-consonant (CVC) construction. This activity may enhance student familiarity with such spelling words. For each of the short vowel sounds (ă as in "cat," ĕ as in "bed," ĭ as in "pig," ŏ as in "fox," and ŭ as in "run"), compile a list of words. When possible, include words from the TEA Spelling List. For example:

ă	ĕ	ĭ	ŏ	ŭ
fat	yes	big	fox	fun
man	get	pig	got	run
had	red	did	hot	sun
hat	bed	sit	top	hug
cat	pet	dig	box	pup

Next, create for each set of five words a sentence containing all five words. For example:

1. The fat man had a hat and a cat.
2. Yes, get the red bed for my pet.
3. The big pig did sit and dig.
4. The fox got hot on top of the box.
5. It's fun to run in the sun and hug a pup.

If possible, create a picture to illustrate each sentence. Alternatively, you may wish to have students attempt to illustrate each sentence as it is presented.

Present one sentence at the beginning of each week. During that week, provide ample opportunities for students to become familiar with the short vowel sound in question. First, concentrate on the five introductory words, individually and in the context of the "sound sentence." Then ask students for other words containing the vowel sound. Present other such words. You may also wish to have students think of new "sound sentences" featuring the short vowel sound of the week. Spelling drills and dictation may also provide effective reinforcement of these sound-letter correspondences.

Picture This

In this activity, students are asked to recall the spellings of words they have learned. Provide pictures of simple nouns that can be easily depicted, such as "bed," "cat," "box," "hat," and "pig." Beside each picture, the student is to write the word that labels it.

SKILL AREA: ENGLISH USAGE

Objective 4: Recognize subject-verb agreement in a sentence.

This objective requires students to identify which one of three sentences contains correct subject-verb agreement.

Sample Item

Teacher says:

FOR EACH QUESTION, READ THE THREE SENTENCES TO YOURSELF. FIND THE ONE SENTENCE WHICH USES WORDS IN THE RIGHT WAY. FILL IN THE SPACE NEXT TO YOUR ANSWER.

◯ My grandmother bake good cookies.

◯ They hides behind the big tree.

◯ Meg and I wish we could fly.

Test Questions

1. Three sentences, as described below, will be presented.
2. Preceding the English usage items will be the instructions, "FOR EACH QUESTION, READ THE THREE SENTENCES TO YOURSELF. FIND THE ONE SENTENCE WHICH USES WORDS IN THE RIGHT WAY. FILL IN THE SPACE NEXT TO YOUR ANSWER."
3. The English usage rule tested in all items states that a verb must agree in number with its subject.

Answer Choices

1. Each test item will consist of three different simple sentences, only one of which will contain correct subject-verb agreement.
2. Subjects eligible for testing include simple subjects, compound subjects formed by "and," and personal pronouns.
3. Each sentence will be written in the present tense.
4. No sentence will exceed eight words in length.
5. All words, except proper nouns, will be taken from the first grade section of the TEA Cumulative Vocabulary List.
6. The correct answer choice will be the sentence in which the verb agrees in number with the subject of the sentence.

7. The incorrect answer choices will be the two sentences in which the subject and verb do not agree in number.

Answer Analysis for Sample Item

1. The first sentence is an incorrect answer choice. The verb, "bake," disagrees in number with its subject, "My grandmother."

2. The second sentence is also an incorrect answer choice. The verb, "hides," disagrees with its subject, "They."

3. The third sentence is the correct answer choice. The compound subject "Meg and I" shows agreement with its verb, "wish."

Instructional Emphases

As first grade students learn to read and to write, they become familiar with the sentence as the unit for conveying thoughts. They learn that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period or a question mark. They learn that each sentence has a "naming part" (subject) and an "action part" (predicate). In addition, students learn that a "naming word" (noun) must relate to a following "action word" (verb) in a certain way, and that there is something wrong with sentences such as "Mary like to sing," and "The children eats their lunch." The TEAMS first grade examination tests students' knowledge of present tense subject-verb agreement as it relates to number.

For some children, this concept will pose little difficulty. These students simply write the way they speak. Other students, however--particularly those who speak nonstandard forms of American English or for whom English is a second language--may have trouble mastering this skill. All students, regardless of linguistic background, can benefit from an awareness of how subject-verb agreement works.

First, students need to become proficient at dividing sentences into their two fundamental parts, subject and predicate. Students can then learn how these parts relate to each other within the sentence. Frequent exposure to verbs with irregular present tense forms (for example, "be" and "have") will help students to internalize these conjugations. You may also need to explain spelling irregularities that occur in some third person singular, present tense verb forms (for example, verbs ending in "-y"). These irregularities will arise in the context of communicating the concept that the third person singular form of present tense regular verbs is the only form that takes a final "s," as in the following conjugation:

I make	we make
you make	you make
he, she, it makes	they make

You may wish to introduce this notion in the form of a simple irony, using nouns (rather than pronouns) as your subjects. The irony lies in the fact that the plural noun usually ends with an "s" while its verb does not, and the singular noun does not generally end in an "s," but its verb does, as in the following examples:

The girl plays.	The girls play.
The boy eats.	The boys eat.
The dog runs.	The dogs run.

Your students will benefit from frequent opportunities to read and to write, because reinforcement in the area of subject-verb agreement arises with every new sentence. You can take frequent advantage of these occasions to clarify and review the concepts involved in this first grade TEAMS objective.

Possible Instructional Activities

Sentence Parts

Explain to students that each sentence contains a "naming part" and an "action part" and that we can divide every sentence into these two parts. The naming part names something, and the rest of the sentence, the action part, tells something about it. Demonstrate this concept with examples at the board, drawing a line between the subject and the predicate in each sentence. Have several sentences divided at the board by students.

Provide lists of simple present tense sentences. Students are to divide the sentences by drawing a line between the subject and predicate of each sentence.

Mix and Match

As in the previous activity, distribute lists of present tense sentences that students are to divide into subject and predicate ("naming part" and "action part"). After students have divided their sentences, the students are to create new sentences by "mixing and matching" subjects and predicates. Each subject and each predicate is to be used once in the creation of a new sentence. You can group sentences in four, providing two singular subjects and two plural subjects so that students must form new sentences by matching a subject in number with a different verb. For example:

We/fly kites at the park.
The bird/sings a pretty song.
The children/are in the library.
Becky/likes the sun.

1. We are in the library.
2. The bird likes the sun.
3. The children fly kites at the park.
4. Becky sings a pretty song.

This activity can be used to introduce how subjects and verbs agree in number.

<u>One, Two</u>

Prepare a worksheet with a large "s" at the top. Two three-word sentences appearing to either side beneath this letter will serve as examples. The first sentence will consist of the word "one" followed by a noun and a verb. The second sentence, appearing to the right of the first, will consist of the word "two" followed by appropriate forms of the same noun and verb that were used in the first sentence. Underline the "s" in each sentence (at the end of the verb in the first sentence and at the end of the noun in the second sentence). Draw an arrow from the large "s" at the top of the page to the underlined "s" in each sentence.

One boy laughs. Two boys laugh.

Beneath the first example sentence should appear several sentences constructed in the same way, but with the "s" omitted at the end of the verb ("One" + [noun] + [verb].). Similarly, corresponding sentences should appear beneath the second example sentence ("Two" + [noun] + [verb].). Leave sufficient spaces between words and between the last word and the period so that students can fill in the missing "s" in each sentence.

At the bottom of the worksheet, you may wish to add a list of sentences in which sentences beginning with "one" and sentences beginning with "two" appear together (perhaps in a central column). This will eliminate the clues provided in the exemplary section at the top of the page as to where the "s" should be added in each type of sentence.